What is claimed is:

1. An image processing apparatus comprising:

a hardware resource that includes at least one of an image forming unit, a read unit, and a display unit;

a first control program;

a second control program; and

an application program, wherein

the hardware resource and the programs are arranged in such a hierarchical architecture that the first control program is superordinate to the hardware resource, and the application program and the second control program are superordinate to the first control program,

the first control program includes a first API (application program interface) for receiving a first request relating to image processing from the second control program and a second request relating to image processing from the application program, and controls, on receiving either of the first and second requests, the hardware resource to perform image processing based on the received request, and

the second control program includes a second API publicly released in advance for receiving a third request relating to image processing from an external source, converts the received third request to a command supported by the first API, and passes the command as the first request to the first control program.

2. The image processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein

the first control program passes the received first request to the application program if the first request is directed to the application program.

3. The image processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the third request is data expressed in an XML.

4. The image processing apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the second control program further includes:

a first converting unit for extracting predetermined information from the received XML data; and

a second converting unit for converting the extracted information to the command supported by the first API.

5. The image processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the hardware resource includes the image forming unit,

the requests relate to execution of a print job, and

on receiving a request relating to execution of the print job, the first control program controls the image forming unit to perform the print job.

6. The image processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the hardware resource includes the read unit,

the requests relate to execution of a scan job, and

on receiving a request relating to execution of the scan job, the first control program controls the read unit to perform the scan job.

7. An image processing apparatus comprising:

a hardware resource including at least one of an image forming unit, a read unit, and a display unit;

a first control program;

a second control program; and

an application program, wherein

the hardware resource and the programs are arranged in a hierarchical architecture in the stated order,

the first control program includes a first API for receiving a first request relating to image processing from the second control program, and controls the hardware resource to perform image processing based on the received first request, and

the second control program includes a second API that is publicly released in advance for receiving a second request relating to image processing from an external source and a third request relating to image processing from the application program, converts, on receiving either of the second and third requests, the received request to a command supported by the first API, and passes the command as the first request to the first control program.

8. The image processing apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein

the second control program passes the received second request to the application program if the second request is directed to the application program.

9. The image processing apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein the second request is data expressed in an XML.

10. The image processing apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein the second control program further includes:

a first converting unit for extracting predetermined information from the received XML data; and

a second converting unit for converting the extracted information to the command supported by the first API.

11. The image processing apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein the hardware resource includes the image forming unit,

the requests relate to execution of a print job, and

on receiving a request relating to execution of the print job, the first control program controls the image forming unit to perform the print job.

12. The image processing apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein the hardware resource includes the read unit,

the requests relate to execution of a scan job, and

on receiving a request relating to execution of the scan job, the first control program controls the read unit to perform the scan job.

13. An image processing apparatus, comprising:

a hardware resource including at least one of an image forming unit, a read unit, and a display unit;

a first control program;

a second control program; and

an application program, wherein

the first control program is arranged between the hardware resource and the application program and the second control program is arranged superordinate to the application program in a hierarchical architecture,

the first control program includes a first API for receiving a first request relating to image processing from the second control program and a second request relating to image processing from the application program, and controls, on receiving either of the first and second requests, the hardware resource to perform image processing based on the received request,

the second control program includes a second API that is publicly released in advance for receiving a third request relating to image processing from an external source, converts the received third request to a command supported by the first API, and passes the command to an appropriate one of the first control program and the application program depending on the requested processing, the command passed to the first control program serving as the first request, and

on receiving the command from the second control program, the application program passes to the first control program, a request for performing the processing based on the received command, the request passed to the first control program serving as the second request.

14. The image processing apparatus according to Claim 13, wherein the third request is data expressed in an XML.

15. The image processing apparatus according to Claim 14, wherein the second control program further includes:

a first converting unit for extracting predetermined information from the received XML data; and

a second converting unit for converting the extracted information to the command supported by the first API.

16. The image processing apparatus according to Claim 13, wherein the hardware resource includes the image forming unit,

the requests relate to execution of a print job, and

on receiving a request relating to execution of the print job, the first control program controls the image forming unit to perform the print job.

17. The image processing apparatus according to Claim 13, wherein the hardware resource includes the read unit,

the requests relate to execution of a scan job, and

on receiving a request relating to execution of the scan job, the first control program controls the read unit to perform the scan job.